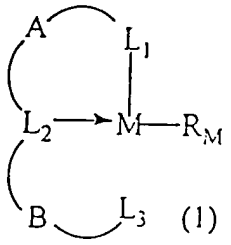
AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (previously presented)

A compound of the formula



(1)

wherein

M is an element of group 12 of the Periodic Table;

R_M is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, halogen, alkyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, alkoxy, cycloalkoxy, aryloxy, alkylthio, cycloalkylthio, arylthio, amino, alkylamino, dialkylamino, cycloalkylamino, di(cycloalkyl) amino, alkyl (cycloalkyl) amino, arylamino, diarylamino, alkylarylamino and (cycloalkyl)arylamino;

And B are independently selected from the group consisting of carbon chain of 2 to 4 carbon atoms, optionally substituted by at least one member of the group consisting of substituted or non-substituted alkyl, cycloalkyl, and aryl, the substituent is selected from the group consisting of halogen, alkyl, nitro and cyano;

L_1 and L_2 are independently $-E_{15}(R15)-$ in which E_{15} is an element of group 15 of the Periodic Table and R_{15} is selected from the group consisting of

hydrogen, substituted or non-substituted alkyl, cycloalkyl and aryl, in which said substituent is selected from the group consisting of halogen, alkyl, nitro and cyano; or $-E_{14}RR'R''$ in which E_{14} is an element of group 14 of the Periodic Table and R, R' and R" are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, substituted or non-substituted alkyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, alkoxy, cycloalkoxy, aryloxy, alkylthio, cycloalkylthio and arylthio, in which the substituents are at least one member of the group consisting of halogen, alkyl, nitro and cyano; or $-SO_2Q$ in which Q is selected from the group consisting of halogen, alkyl, haloalkyl and aryl optionally substituted by at least one substitutent selected from the group consisting of alkyl, haloalkyl and halogen;

L_3 is $-E'_{15}(R'_{15})(R''_{15})$ or $-E_{16}(R_{16})$ in which

E'_{15} is an element of group 15 of the Periodic Table

and

E_{16} is an element of group 16 of the Periodic Table

and

R'_{15} and R''_{15} are, independently, selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, substituted or non-substituted alkyl, cycloalkyl and aryl, in which the substituents are at least one member of the group consisting of halogen, alkyl, nitro and cyano; or $-E'_{14}TT'T''$ in which E'_{14} is an element of group 14 of the Periodic Table and T, T' and T" are independently

selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, substituted or non-substituted alkyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, alkoxy, cycloalkoxy, aryloxy, alkylthio, cycloalkylthio and arylthio, in which said substituents are at least one member of the group consisting of halogen, alkyl, nitro and cyano; or $-SO_2Q$ in which Q' is selected from the group consisting of halogen, alkyl, haloalkyl and aryl optionally substituted by at least one member of the group consisting of alkyl, haloalkyl and halogen.

Claim 2 (previously presented)

A compound of claim 1, in the form of a monomer or a dimer.

Claim 3 (previously presented)

A compound of claim 1 wherein

R_M is alkyl;

A and B are, independently, a carbon chain of 2 to 4 carbon atoms;

L_1 and L_2 are, independently, $-E_{15}(R_{15})-$ in which E_{15} is nitrogen or phosphorus and R_{15} is hydrogen or $-E_{14}RR'R''$ in which E_{14} is carbon or silicon and R, R' and R" are, independently, hydrogen or alkyl;

L_3 is $-E'_{15}(R'_{15})(R''_{15})$ in which E'_{15} is nitrogen or phosphorus, and R'_{15} and R''_{15} are, independently, hydrogen; or $-E'_{14}TT'T'$ in which E'_{14} is carbon or silicon atom and T, T' and T" are, independently, hydrogen or alkyl.

Claim 4 (previously presented)

A compound of claim 1 wherein M is zinc.

Claim 5 (previously presented)

A compound of claim 1 wherein

R_M is methyl;

A and B are, independently, a carbon chain of 2 carbon atoms;

L_1 and L_{12} are, independently, $-E_{15}(R_{15})-$ in which E_{15} is nitrogen and R_{15} is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, methyl, ethyl, propyl, isopropyl and $-E_{14}RR'R''$ in which E_{14} is silicon and R, R' and R" are, independently, selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, methyl, ethyl, propyl and isopropyl;

L_3 is $-E'_{15}(R'_{15})\ (R''_{15})$ in which E'_{15} is nitrogen, and R'_{15} and R''_{15} are, independently, selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, methyl, ethyl, propyl, isopropyl and –E'TT'T" in which E'_{14} is silicon and T, T' and T" are, independently, selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, methyl, ethyl, propyl, and isopropyl.

Claim 6 (previously presented)

A compound of claim 1 which is

$-[Me_3SiN(H)CH_2CH_2N(Me)CH_2CH_2NSiNe_3]ZnMe$; or

$-[Me_3SiN(H)CH_2CH_2N(H)CH_2CH_2NSiMe_3]ZnMe$.

Claim 7 (previously amended)

A compound of claim 6 in dimer form.

Claim 8 (previously presented)

A process for the preparation of a compound of claim 1, comprising reacting a compound of the formula

$$(L_1\text{-}A\text{-}L_2\text{-}B\text{-}L_3)', Y^+ \qquad (I)$$

wherein L_1, A, L_2, B and L_3 are defined as claim 1 and Y is hydrogen or metal or a metallic with a compound of formula

$$MR_MZ \qquad (II)$$

in which M and R_M are defined as in claim 1 and Z is a parting group, to obtain a compound of claim 1.

Claims 9 to 11 (cancelled)

Claim 12 (previously presented)

A process for the preparation of block or random copolymers, or polymers which comprises contacting at least one monomer, a chain initiator and/or a regulator, a polymerization catalyst and optionally a polymerization solvent, at a temperature between ambient temperature and 250°C, for a few minutes to 300 hours, wherein the chain initiator and/or the regulator and the polymerization catalyst are a compound of claim 1.

Claim 13 (previously presented)

The process of claim 12, wherein the monomer is selected from the group consisting of epoxides, and cyclic esters.

Claim 14 (cancelled)

Claim 15 (previously presented)

In a process for the polymerization or copolymerization of heterocycles, the improvement comprising using as the polymerization catalyst a compound of claim 1.

Claim 16 (previously presented)

The process of claim 15 wherein the heterocycle is propylene oxide.

Claim 17 (previously presented)

In a process for the polymerization or copolymerization of cyclic esters, the improvement comprising using as the polymerization catalyst a compound of claim 1.

Claim 18 (previously presented)

The process of claim 17 wherein the cyclic ester is that of lactic acid and/or glycolic acid.